

# AJES

Adirondack Journal of  
Environmental Studies

## ADIRONDACK RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Paul Smith's College  
201 Paolozzi Center  
P.O. Box 96  
Paul Smiths, NY 12970

### MISSION STATEMENT

The *Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies* (AJES) exists to foster a dialogue about the broad range of issues that concern the Adirondacks and Northern Forest.

AJES serves to bridge the gaps among academic disciplines and among researchers and practitioners devoted to understanding and promoting the development of sustainable communities, both human and wild.

The journal purposefully avoids serving as a vehicle for any single or special point of view. To the contrary, in searching for common ground AJES welcomes variety and a broad spectrum of perspectives from its contributors.

### CONTRIBUTING TO AJES

We encourage the submission of manuscripts, reviews, photographs, artwork and letters to the editor. For additional information please visit the AJES website at [www.ajes.org/](http://www.ajes.org/) or contact Adirondack Research Consortium.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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## PREROGATIVE

# Perspectives from a 30-Year Career Adirondack Scientist

By DAN SPADA

I retired in 2012 as the Supervisor of the Resource Analysis and Scientific Services Division of the New York State Adirondack Park Agency after a nearly 30 year career. I have seen some interesting changes through the years which have brought into focus my work today with the Adirondack Research Consortium and my perspectives on the Adirondacks.

From a purely scientific perspective, I have been fortunate to observe and be involved with many changes. The once ominous threats of acid rain have been mitigated but we continue to confront the complicated residual effects of forest impacts and mercury contamination. Two recent Consortium Adirondack Achievement Awards have been presented to Charley Driscoll and Myron Mitchel who have done work in these areas. Today, we face the global challenge of climate change and experience its effects here in the Adirondacks on our natural resources directly and through catastrophic storm events happening with more regularity. Jerry Jenkins, also an Adirondack Achievement Award winner, and Curt Stager have done excellent work in this area. Resource protection has taken on a whole new look as we evaluate both direct impacts and ecosystem services. The Adirondack Watershed Institute's work on water quality is a good example as the direct impacts of winter road salt use are evaluated along with the monetary costs of good water quality on property values.

I'm sobered to think of those that I knew and worked with who are no longer with us that made lasting contributions to the Adirondacks. I miss Ed Ketchledge, Greenie Chase, Barbara McMartin and Clarence Petty for their

deep passion and knowledge of the components of this ecosystem including the people who live and work here. I ask that you look back on your own time here in the Park and remember those that went before us as well as take the time to celebrate those who are still with us.

I have been lucky enough to see advancements in collaborations and technologies that have significantly enhanced resource protection. The APA and SUNY Plattsburgh joined forces to combine aerial photography and computer technologies to digitize the natural resources of all the major river basins in the Adirondacks. This nationally awarded project has led to the universal availability of this information and a better understanding of the natural world and human interaction with it. The APA also led a collaborative project to mitigate the impacts of invasive species on Adirondack vegetation. This project led to the formation of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) which is doing good work on progress against this problem today with the support of the Nature Conservancy.

Even more so, it has been most heartening to see the evolution in the Adirondack community both from a regional perspective and at the community level. Deep divides of perspectives have given way to an era of tolerance, listening, and cooperation. It seems as if the "negativity" is disappearing from the Adirondacks. Clearly, even in the tough times that we are recovering from, there is a new optimism and desire to overcome rather than to erect obstacles. There is a new understanding that undiminished environmental quality underpins the economic well-being and, ultimately, the social fabric within the Park.



Broad-based efforts to improve our communities have benefited from targeted resources and programs such as “Cleaner Greener Communities” led by NYSERDA and ANCA. This was the focus of the Consortium’s 2014 Annual Conference which was based on the Dave Mason and Jim Herman-led Adirondack Futures “Sustainable Life” scenario which is presented in more detail in Volume 18 of AJES. Individually, we are seeing grassroots initiatives to enhance community character that significantly improve the quality of life in the Adirondacks. Kate Fish’s community panel presentations at the 2014 Annual Conference are good examples of this.

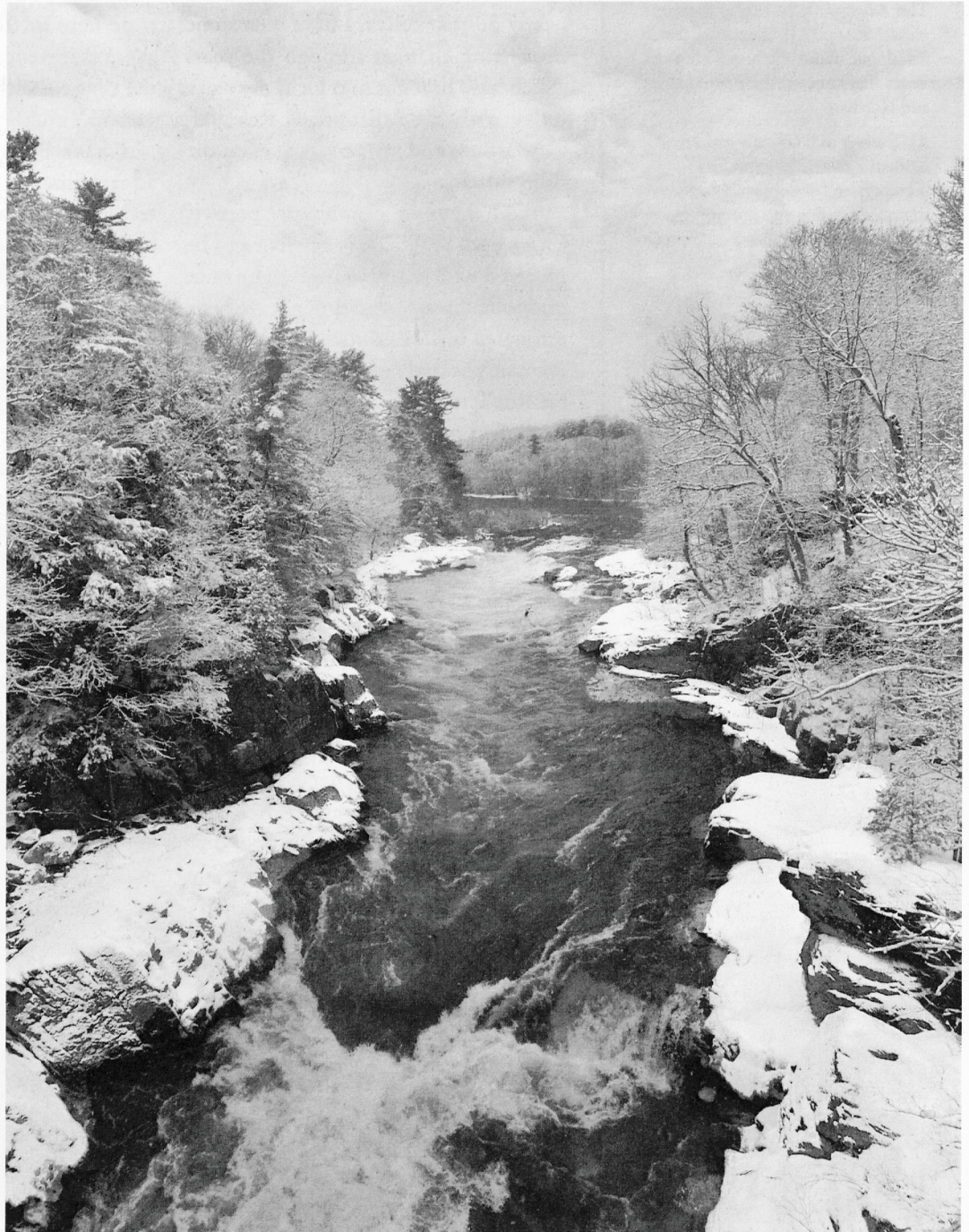
Being retired the last two years has given me the opportunity to reflect on all of this. Transitions are challenging but also rewarding. Common to all of this is the fine work and contributions of scientists and researchers with interest in the Adirondacks and the leaders that support and encourage them. The “partners” listed on the back of this Journal are good examples. Reflection on the past is important as is knowing historic context. But looking to the future is also important; and I am so pleased to continually meet and be delighted by new young people coming to the Adirondacks

to do research, to make music and art, to be part of our community, to make a life. The Consortium has long held the shared belief that the Adirondacks are one of the finest and most unique resources in the world and the best way to protect and enhance them is through good research and information which is freely shared. At the Consortium, we live this every day. Through a 30-year career

perspective, I’m certainly seeing it is true and worth investing the time and energy to see that it continues to happen.

#### References

- Jenkins, Jerry. 2010. *Climate Change in the Adirondacks: The Path to Sustainability*. Comstock Pub. Associates, Ithaca, NY.
- Stager, Curt. 2011. *Deep Future: The Next 100,000 Years of Life on Earth*. Thomas Dunne, New York, NY.



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KEN RIMBY